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ABSTRACT

This collection of learning units introduces parents to the role of nutrition in their young child's cognitive development. Designed to be easy to read and useful for families with limited resources, the materials help parents teach their young children good eating habits by offering information, feeding tips, creative activities for parents and children to do together, and recipes. Each unit is self-contained; examples of unit titles include "Feeding Your Baby," "Feeding Your Toddler," "Food and Learning," and "Healthy and Tasty Meals for Less." The collection covers: (1) keeping children's minds on learning; (2) making meal times pleasant and a time for learning; (3) planning child-appealing snacks and meals on a budget; (4) shopping wisely (with or without children); (5) preparing food with young children; and (6) feeding babies and toddlers the foods they need to grow and stay healthy. (EV)

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# Exploring HEALTHY EATING

## Activities for Parents and Children Together

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Prepared by
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School of Nutrition Science and Policy
Tufts University with HIPPY USA

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# For PROFESSIONALS

***Exploring Healthy Eating: Activities for Parents and Children Together*** introduces parents to the role nutrition plays in their young child's cognitive development. Designed to be easy-to-read and useful for families with limited resources, these materials help parents with young children teach their children good eating habits by offering useful information, feeding tips and creative activities for parents and children to do together. This series talks about how to:

- **Keep your child's mind on learning**
- **Make mealtimes pleasant and a time for learning**
- **Plan child-appealing snacks and meals on a budget**
- **Shop wisely (with or without children)**
- **Prepare food with young children**
- **Feed babies and toddlers the foods they need to grow and stay healthy**

***Exploring Healthy Eating: Activities for Parents and Children Together*** encourages parents to be the teachers, helping their young children explore new ways to experience healthy eating. Parents can be taught to use these materials through a variety of programs:

- **Home-based day care and early intervention programs**
- **Education programs in homeless shelters**
- **WIC nutrition education programs**
- **Family literacy programs**
- **Parenting programs**

Each unit is self-contained, so care providers can use individual units to suit their needs. Single pages can be duplicated to use as parent handouts. Blocks of information could be incorporated into newsletters.

The Center is interested in working with organizations who want to use the curriculum in their programs. Training opportunities can be arranged. Please contact the Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy for information on how to adapt these materials to a particular setting or situation.

# Feeding Your BABY

**A baby who gets warm, loving care learns to be secure. Hold your baby close, talk to him, and look at him when you feed him. This will calm him and may make it easier for him to eat.**

**Breast feeding** is a good way to feed your baby. It gives your baby all of the things that he needs to grow and stay healthy.

### Why Should You Breast Feed?

- It is free. You do not have to buy formula and bottles.
- It is safe and clean. You do not have to clean bottles or keep formula cold.
- The milk is always the right temperature. There are no bottles to warm.
- Breast milk protects your baby from some germs that could make him sick.

### *Need More Information?*

Your doctor, nurse, or **WIC** nutritionist can answer questions about breast feeding.

**Iron Fortified Baby Formula** also gives your baby what he needs to grow and stay healthy. Do not feed a baby less than 1 year old cow's milk. It is too hard to digest.

## DID YOU KNOW...

When a baby sleeps with a bottle, the liquid can collect in his mouth close to the insides of his ears. This can cause an ear infection. Milk and juice left in his mouth overnight can also cause tooth decay.

# How To START Your Baby on Solid Foods

**Every baby is different. You and your doctor should decide when your baby should eat solid foods.**

Offer your child new foods, but do not force him to eat a new food until he is ready. Use a small spoon to feed solid foods to your baby. If he drinks strained foods from a bottle, he may get too much to eat. This will also make it harder for him to learn how to eat properly.

- At about **4 months**, offer iron fortified baby cereal. Thin with breast milk or formula. Start with 1 to 2 tablespoons.
- At about **5 or 6 months**, offer strained fruits and vegetables, and juice.
- At about **7 or 8 months**, you can offer your baby strained meat, mashed potato, and mashed fruits and vegetables.
- By **9 to 12 months**, your baby may be ready to try: mashed beans, scrambled eggs, soft cheese, ground meat, pasta, finger foods like toast and crackers, yogurt, pieces of soft fruit.

## Offer Only One New Food at a Time

If your baby gets a rash or diarrhea from a food, stop feeding that food until it clears up. Try the food one more time. If the same thing happens, do not feed him that food. Tell your baby's doctor that your baby may be allergic to that food.

## Did You Know?

A baby less that one year old should not eat honey. It may have germs in it that will not harm an older child but can make a young baby very sick.

# Let Your Baby Listen to You

**Read, talk and sing to your child. He may not know the words, but he will love the sound of your voice!**

This will help him to learn better when he is older. Meal time is a great time to talk to your baby. Tell him that his applesauce is *cold* and *sweet*. The carrots in his bowl are *warm*. The Cheerios on his tray are *round* and *crunchy*.

Older babies love to eat and play with dry cereal on their high chair tray. Spread some Cheerios on his tray and count them out with him:

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5...** *Once I caught a fish alive!*
**6, 7, 8, 9, 10...** *Then I let him go again!*
*Why did you let him go? Because he bit my finger so!*
*Which finger did he bite? This little finger on the right!*

**or...**

**1, 2...** *Put on my shoe!* **3, 4...** *Close the door!*
**5, 6...** *Pick up sticks!* **7, 8...** *Shut the gate!* **9, 10...** *Do it again!*

## TIP BOX

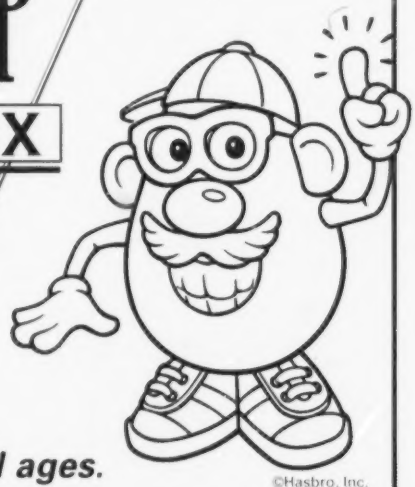
### Include Your Baby at Family Meals

Your baby may be eating his own foods, but he needs to feel like part of the family.

Pull his high chair up to the table and let him listen in on what the family talks about during meals.

Give him some finger foods to eat or some toys to play with if he has already eaten.

***Shared meal times are good for children of all ages.***



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# TIP BOX

## You Can Save Money by Making Your Own Baby Food

### What foods can you use?

- Canned or fresh, ripe fruit
- Well-cooked vegetables (a few leftover carrots or peas are enough to make a meal)
- Meat chopped very small, with no skin, fat, or bones

*Use a fork to mash a little bit of food on a plate. You can also push the food through a small strainer. The food can be thinned with a little bit of formula or water.* ***Do not*** *add salt or sugar.*

### Make sure to:

- Wash your hands before making food.
- Make sure that the work area is clean.
- Put leftovers in the refrigerator. Use in the next 2 days.

You can also freeze leftovers in an ice cube tray. Put frozen cubes in a plastic bag, label, and date. To heat, warm in a pan on the stove or microwave for 20-30 seconds. Stir well, and check the temperature before serving.

## A Food Program That Helps Families

**WIC** provides nutrition education and vouchers for food to pregnant women, and their infants and children. Ask your local welfare or social services office where you can apply for **WIC**.

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# Feeding Your Toddler

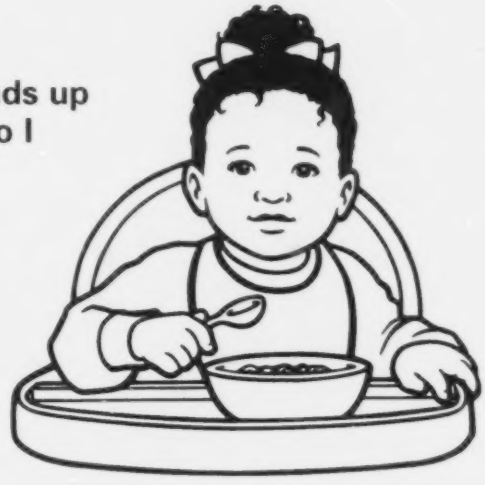
**Your toddler wants to do things for herself now. She knows what foods she likes and does not like. Both you and your child have to get used to this new stage in her life. Many parents have questions about feeding their toddler.**

## My child refuses to try new foods. What should I do?

Toddlers love familiar food. They often refuse to try new foods. Give her a small taste of a food that is new to her. If she refuses to eat it, offer the food again at another time. You may have to serve the food many times before she eats it. Make sure that you eat it, too. Children learn from watching you.

## My toddler loves to eat with a spoon, but ends up wearing most of her food. Should I feed her so I know that she is getting enough to eat?

Eating with a spoon is a skill that your child needs to learn. It will take her longer, and she will be messy, but she will get enough to eat. You may also want to give her some finger foods that she can handle easily. Expect some spills as your child learns to eat. This is part of being a toddler.



## My toddler is a very picky eater. How can I get her to eat?

This is a common problem. Here are a few things that you can try.

- Serve small portions. Start with 2-3 tablespoons, and let her ask for more.
- Give her some quiet time before meals. This may make it easier for her to sit at the table.
- Do not let your child fill up on snacks or drinks right before a meal. She will not be hungry when she sits down to eat.

# How To Help Your Child Learn About Food

**Your child uses all of her senses to learn about the world around her. Explore different foods with her when you play together. Let her see for herself how foods look, smell, feel, sound, and taste.**

- Point out **shapes**. The bread in her sandwich is *square*. A green bean is *long* and *skinny*. A tomato is *round*, and tomato slices are *round*, too.

- Your toddler is learning about **touch**. The shell of an egg is *smooth*, a cracker is *bumpy*. Feel the skin of an apple. How does it feel?

- When you are cooking, ask her to tell you what she **smells**. Does she like the smell of applesauce? Can she smell the beans cooking?

- What about **sounds**? What sound does celery make when it is snapped in half? What sound do you make when you eat dry cereal?

- Foods **taste** different. Some foods are *sweet*, like apple juice. Some foods are *salty*, like crackers.

- As she learns about **colors**, point out the *green* peas, the *red* apples, and the *white* milk. This is a good way to help her begin to learn colors.

# Parent & Child Activities

**Make a snack with your child. Let her do as much of the work as she can. Children learn more by doing than by watching. Here are some suggestions:**

**Try this if you do not mind a little mess:**

*Put a small amount of pudding on a plate or on the tray of your child's high chair. Let her "paint" with the pudding...*

## Instant Pudding

**What you need:**
1 Package Instant Pudding
2 cups milk

**What you do:**

1. *Put the pudding and milk in a container or jar with a tight fitting lid.*
2. *Shake well and pour into serving dishes.*
3. *Let set for a few minutes and serve.*

*...show her how to draw letters, numbers, and animals in the pudding paint...She will love "paint" that she can eat!*

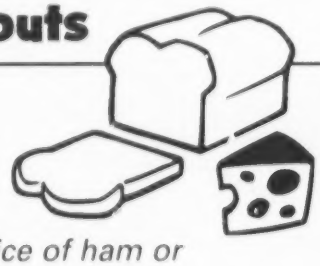
## Fruit Cup

**What you need:**
Banana
Canned Peaches or Pears

**What you do:**

1. *Cut a banana and some canned peaches or pears into small pieces using a butter knife.*
2. *Put the fruit into small cups.*
3. *Let children dip the fruit into low-fat vanilla yogurt.*

## Sandwich Cut-outs



**What you need:**
Bread
Ham or Cheese

**What you do:**

1. *Have your child cut a slice of ham or cheese and a slice of soft bread into shapes, using a cookie cutter or butter knife.*
2. *Put together as a sandwich.*

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# TIP BOX

## Things To Think About If You Have a Toddler

### 1 Watch Out for These Foods

*Small children can choke easily on small round foods like popcorn, peanuts, pieces of hot dog, or hard candy.*

**These are not good foods to feed a toddler.**

- Cut foods into small pieces before feeding them to a small child so that they do not get stuck in her throat.
- Make sure that an adult is always in the room while your toddler is eating.

### 2 Too Much of a Good Thing

*Children who drink a lot of juice between meals may not be hungry for other foods at meal time.*

**This means that they may eat less of the foods that they need to grow and stay healthy.**

- One or two small cups of juice a day is fine. If they are still thirsty, offer them water instead.
- If your small child likes to drink from a bottle between meals, offer a bottle of water instead of juice.



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# FOOD & LEARNING

Eating healthy foods throughout the day is important for learning. These stories show that when children are hungry, learning is difficult.

1 Maria skips breakfast each morning. Then at preschool she is cranky, sits alone and doesn't want to play with her classmates. Her teacher is concerned because Maria has trouble paying attention. She misses out on many learning activities, including learning that comes through play. After lunch, Maria is happier, more alert and interested in group activities and play.

***By eating breakfast Maria would have energy she needs to play and learn, pay attention and do her best in the morning.***

2 Tony eats little at meals but instead snacks on sweets and soda. He is often too tired to go to preschool. His doctor says he needs more iron in his blood. Tony's mother is worried because he is falling behind his classmates on many early learning skills.

***Eating healthy foods for snacks and meals would give Tony the iron his body needs. He would be more alert and less likely to miss school.***

# How To

## KEEP your child's mind on learning

1. Offer a variety of healthy foods for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks between meals.

2. Serve foods rich in iron each day (see tip box #1).

3. Find out about food programs that can help families buy good food and keep their children healthy (see tip box #2).

4. Have breakfast every day. Here are some ideas to make sure your family doesn't miss out on breakfast:

   - *Set the table for breakfast the night before.*
   - *Try having "lunch" or "dinner" foods for breakfast. Breakfast can be any combination of healthy food like pizza and milk, a tuna sandwich, or leftovers.*
   - *Pack a breakfast to bring along to eat on the way (like a bagel and peanut butter, fruit and a sippy cup of milk).*
   - *Whenever possible eat breakfast with your child. Children will learn that breakfast is important if they see others eating breakfast.*

# Parent & Child Activities

① MEASURE your child's height and weight every few months. Help your child make a picture chart of his growth. Label his picture with the date and his height and weight. Have your child add new pictures to the chart each time you notice he has grown. Tell your child how proud you are that he is growing **STRONG** and *healthy!*

② Join your child in his favorite playtime activities. Try to do the same things he does at the playground or the park. Ask your child what he likes to do and why. Talk about how eating healthy foods gives him the energy he needs to

**climb, jump & PLAY!**

③ Help your child write a picture story about his most recent trip to the doctor. Share what the doctor said about his health. Discuss how healthy foods help children stay well and fight off illness.

TIP BOX #1

## Foods With Iron

One key nutrient in foods that helps children learn is iron. Foods rich in iron come from the meat/bean group and the bread group. Some fruits and vegetables (like raisins or green peas) also have iron.

Extra iron is added to foods like cereals, breads, noodles and rice. These foods may have the words "enriched" or "iron-fortified" on their labels.

Your child may like some of these foods that are good sources of iron:

- ***peanut butter on crackers or bread***
- ***hamburgers and other meat dishes***
- ***baked beans, canned pork and beans***
- ***bean burritos or bean enchiladas***
- ***cream of wheat or dry cereal***
- ***raisins and dried fruit***
- ***green peas***
- ***noodles, rice and tortillas***
- ***macaroni and cheese***
- ***spaghetti and meatballs***

TIP BOX #2

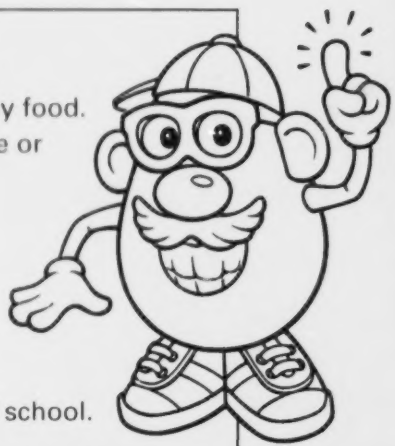
## Food Programs That Help Families

***The Food Stamp Program*** helps ***low-income families*** buy food. Families can apply for Food Stamps at their local welfare or social services office.

***WIC*** provides nutrition education and vouchers for food to ***pregnant women, and their infants and children.*** Ask your local welfare or social services office where you can apply for WIC.

***School Breakfast and School Lunch*** provide nutritious meals to ***school-aged children.*** Families can apply for free or low cost meals. Call your local school.

***Summer Food Service Program*** provides meals in the summer months (when schools are closed). Meals are free to ***all children (0-18).*** Call your local school or youth program for information on the Summer Food Service Program in your neighborhood.



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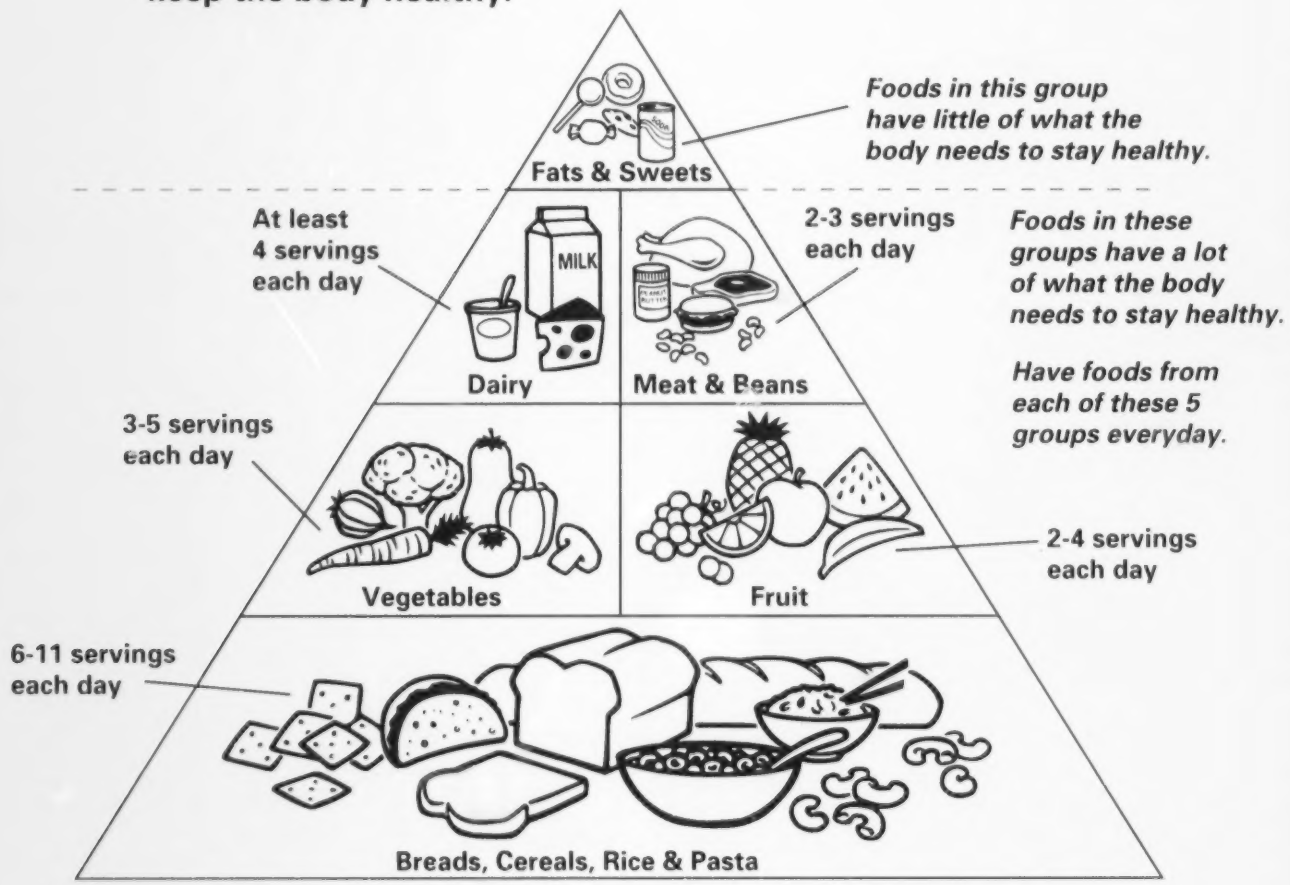
# Feeding young CHILDREN

Feeding young children means knowing:

1. Which foods they need to eat,
2. How much they need to eat and
3. How often they need to eat.

## ① Which foods do they need to eat?

**For meals and snacks, young children need the kinds of foods that keep the body healthy.**


Foods in this group have little of what the body needs to stay healthy.
Fats & Sweets
At least 4 servings each day
2-3 servings each day
Foods in these groups have a lot of what the body needs to stay healthy.
MILK
Dairy
Meat & Beans
Have foods from each of these 5 groups everyday.
3-5 servings each day
2-4 servings each day
Vegetables
Fruit
6-11 servings each day
Breads, Cereals, Rice & Pasta

Some foods (like pizza, macaroni and cheese, stews and soups) are made up of foods from more than one group. A bowl of stew that has both vegetables and meat provides a serving of vegetables and a serving of meat.

Your child needs to eat a variety of foods from each group (breads, fruits, vegetables, meats and dairy) to grow, keep active and stay healthy.

## ② How much do they need to eat?

**Young children need smaller servings of food than older children or adults.**

| | Food Groups | Food | One child-sized serving is: |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Bread** | Bread | 1/2 slice |
| | | Cereal, Rice, Pasta | 1/4 cup |
| | **Fruit** | Whole Fruit | 1/2 |
| | **Vegetable** | Juice | 1/3 cup |
| | | Leafy raw vegetables | 1/2 cup |
| | | Other fruits/vegetables (canned, cooked or raw) | 1/4 cup |
| | **Dairy** | Milk | 1/2 cup |
| | | Cheese | 1 slice |
| | | Yogurt/pudding | 1/2 cup |
| | **Meat & Bean** | Meat/fish/chicken | 1/4 cup |
| | | Eggs | 1 egg |
| | | Peanut butter | 2 Tablespoons |
| | | Cooked beans | 1/2 cup |

- Or, before you serve your child, **ask her how much she wants to eat.** Your child will eat better when she is able to finish all the food on her plate.

- Don't worry if your child eats less food on a single day. A child who eats little one day will most likely make up for it the next day or two. Continue to offer her a variety of foods from each food group at snacks and meals.

## ③ How often do they need to eat?

**Young children need breakfast, lunch, dinner *and* snacks between meals.** They also act and feel best when they eat their meals and snacks around the same time every day.

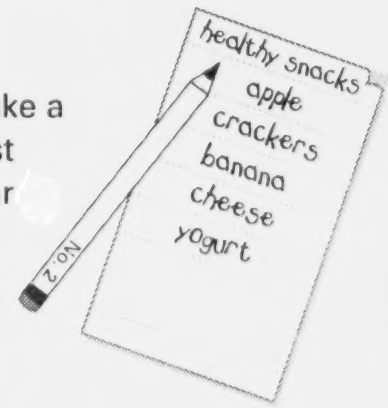
# How To HELP your child eat right

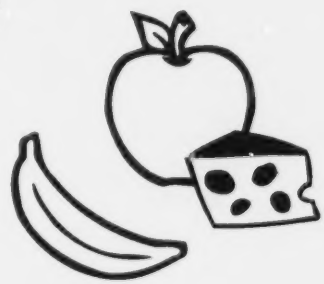
- For meals and snacks, offer foods that keep the body healthy.
- If your child doesn't like a certain food (like milk), offer foods from the same group (like cheese or yogurt).
- Buy only those foods that you want your child to eat.
- Have your child help you prepare a snack or meal to bring along when she will be away from home.
- Eat the kinds of food you want your child to eat. If she sees you eating and enjoying vegetables, she will be more likely to eat them.

# Parent & Child Activities

1. With your child, try to identify each food that you have around the house as either a bread, fruit, vegetable, dairy food, meat/bean or from the fat and sweet group, (foods like sweets, soda, chips and cake). Discuss how foods in the fat and sweet group have little of what our bodies need to stay healthy.

2. Have your child help you make a healthy snack list. Use the list when shopping or when your child wants a snack.



3. Help your child think up, and then make a "Wacky Snack". This could be a food or a combination of foods that your child wouldn't usually have for a snack (like a banana and peanut butter sandwich or a baked potato).

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# TIP BOX

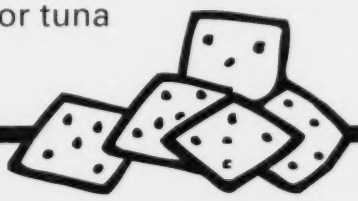
# Snacks for a *healthy* body!

## sweet snacks

- **Homemade fruit pies** – with a rolling pin, roll a slice of bread till flat. Mix grated apple and a small amount of sugar, cinnamon and vanilla. Spoon apple mixture onto bread. Roll and fasten with a toothpick. Bake 10-15 minutes at 350 degrees. Remove toothpick and serve.
- **Fruit Crisp** – Slice peaches, apples or pears. Top with cinnamon, oatmeal (uncooked) and a bit of brown sugar. Bake at 350 degrees until fruit is cooked (about 20-30 minutes).
- **Popsicles** – *made from fruit juice*
- **Graham or animal crackers**
- **A homemade fruit salad**
- **Fig or granola bars**
- **Cornbread or muffins**
- **Gelatin** – *mixed with fruit*

## crunchy snacks

- Homemade **"trail mix"** – mix dry cereal, raisins and pretzels
- Raw vegetables dipped in salad dressing (as a dip) or peanut butter
- A child-sized green salad
- Cracker snacks: Top crackers with cheese or peanut butter, egg salad or slices of hard-boiled egg or tuna



## snacks made with dairy foods

- A cup of orange juice with a scoop of vanilla frozen yogurt
- Hot cocoa made with milk
- Pudding topped with sliced bananas
- Yogurt mixed with fruit and topped with bits of graham cracker
- Small cubes of cheese served with slices of fruit

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# Happy MEALTIMES

Meals are a time for eating and learning. By sharing in mealtime talk, children can practice skills (like asking questions and sharing stories) that will help them later in school. Children can learn new words and learn more about the world around them by listening to meal time talk.

**Children learn when:**

- You serve new food.
- You explain how things are related.
- You share stories together.

**Example:**

"This is a vegetable called broccoli. Would you like to try some?"

"The food is hot because it just came out of the oven."

"I read there is going to be a big storm tomorrow. Remember when we got caught in the rain and got soaking wet?"

*What will you do today?*

Mealtimes are also a time for young children to practice feeding themselves. Since they are still learning how to do this, they might need to:

- use their fingers to get foods (like peas) onto a fork or spoon
- have someone else cut up their meat or big pieces of food
- have help serving themselves

Eating meals with others makes learning these things easier since children can learn by watching how others feed themselves.

Learning comes easiest when mealtimes are calm and pleasant. When children help prepare meals they learn and eat better.

# How To GET the Most Out of Mealtimes

## ① Make mealtimes a calm pleasant time of day.

- Give your child time to prepare for meals. Have a routine that lets him know when it's time to stop what he's doing, when to wash up and when to come to the table.
- Turn the TV off during meals.
- Ask your child how much he wants to eat or let him serve himself. This can lead to less wasted food and fewer meal time hassles.
- Expect spills and other accidents at meals. Try not to let them disturb the entire meal. Show your child how he can help clean up and avoid future spills.
- Teach by showing instead of just telling. Example: "Holding the cup with both hands like this makes it easier to drink from."
- Give praise for positive behavior. When children feel good about how they feed themselves, they tend to eat better.

## ② Get the most out of mealtime talk.

- Eat meals with your child as often as you can.
- Ask each family member to share a story about his day. Leave time for everyone.
- Encourage your child to ask questions.
- Tell fun stories or share jokes.

## ③ Let your child help at mealtime.

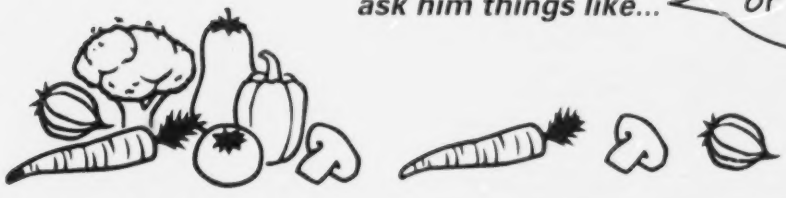
- Read the Parent and Child Activities below for ideas.

# Parent & Child Activities

## ① When you have time, have your child help you...

- ***plan a meal***
- ***choose which vegetable to serve at dinner***

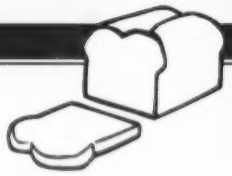
***ask him things like...*** "Should we have corn or carrots?"



- ***set or clear the table***
- ***wipe up spills***
- ***tear lettuce leaves for salad***
- ***sprinkle toppings like cheese on foods you are making***
- ***stir and mix foods***

Know that your child might not do a "perfect" job. Give praise for effort. ("I can see you worked hard on that. I'm proud of how hard you tried. Thank you.")

At meal time, ask your child to talk about how he helped to prepare the meal.

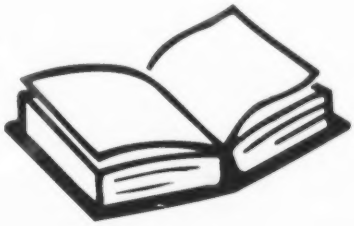


**Read books to your child that tell stories about ways storybook characters have learned better eating habits. Check the children's section of your local library for these books:**

**BREAD AND JAM FOR FRANCES** *by Russell Hoban*

**GREEN EGGS AND HAM** *by Dr. Seuss*

**GREGORY, THE TERRIBLE EATER** *by Mitchell Sharmat*



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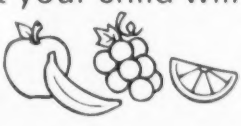
## TIP BOX

# What to do when...

***– Your child is not hungry at mealtime.***

- Have him join you at the table anyway (for his company).
- Try serving smaller amounts of food for snacks.
- Sugary drinks can make your child less hungry for food at meals. Offer water instead of soda or juice drinks when your child is thirsty.

***– Your child is hungry but doesn't want to eat what you've prepared.***

- Always have something at meals that your child will eat like milk, bread or fruit. 

***– Your child never wants to try new foods.***

- Serve new foods along with other favorite foods.
- Let him choose how much of the new food he would like to try.
- Let him take the new food out of his mouth (politely) if he finds that he does not like it.
- Try again at another meal. Children need time to get used to new things.



Prepared by Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy, Tufts University (617-627-3956) for HIPPY USA

# Healthy & tasty MEALS For Less

Planning meals ahead of time will help you save money and eat better. You'll be...

- Less likely to buy expensive fast food, and
- more likely to have healthy meals.

Having your children help you plan meals teaches them how to choose foods wisely.

Children are more likely to eat meals that they have helped to plan.

Another way to provide tasty, healthy meals that cost less is to use grains like rice, noodles or macaroni, or to use beans. Kidney beans, lentils, chick peas, pinto and red, black or white beans, have iron and protein like meat. But, they cost less and are lower in fat. Grains also have iron and are low in fat.

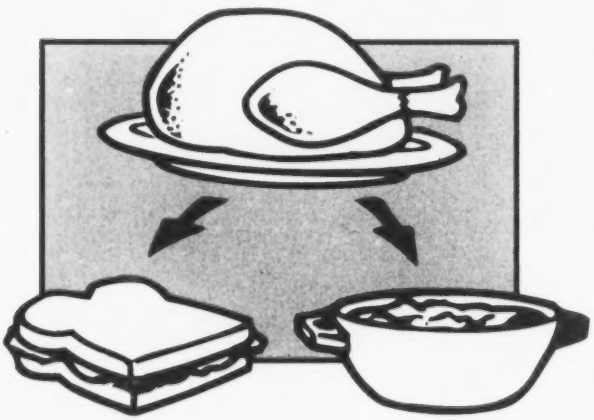
# How To PLAN meals

**1 Make a list of the meals for which you'll need to buy food.**

**② Decide what foods to serve at each of these meals. Here are some tips:**

*•Plan meals that include foods you already have at home that you want to use up.*

*•Plan to cook more than you'll need for one meal. Refrigerate and use for another meal within two days, or freeze and save for a day when you have little time to cook.*



*•Find out what is on sale and plan some meals based on sale items. Keep in mind how much you want to spend.*

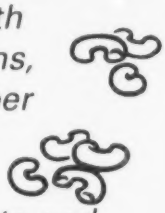
*•Plan a vegetable as a side dish (if vegetables aren't part of the main dish). Try to choose fruit for dessert.*

*•Work from a list of your family's favorite meals (see the Parent and Child Activities).*

Plan to serve some meals that use mostly **grains** and **beans.** Some ways to use grains and beans are:

**Stir-fry rice or noodles with vegetables and a small amount of meat.*

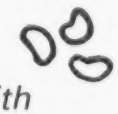
**Cook chopped garlic in a small amount of oil. Toss with cooked macaroni, beans, vegetables, black pepper and lemon juice.*



**Toss cold cooked pasta and cold peas with tuna and a small amount of mayonnaise, for a cold dish.*

**Use beans in place of meat in casseroles, stews and spaghetti sauce.*

**Mix cooked white and black beans and rice, with sliced celery and tomatoes. Cool. Toss with vinegar and a small amount of oil and serve as a cold dish.*



**Mix rice or noodles with chicken, beef or vegetable soup (to make a heartier soup).*

③ **Write down what you've decided to serve for each meal. Use this to make up your shopping list.**

*Thursday Night's Menu*

•Mom's Rice & Bean Casserole
•Bread •Salad •Grapes

*Ingredients*

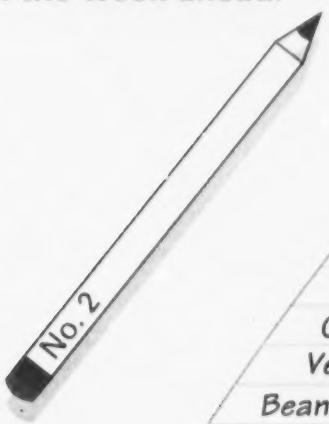
| | |
|---|---|
| •lentils | •bread |
| •rice | •lettuce |
| •tomatoes | •carrots |
| •onion | •dressing |
| •nutmeg | •grapes |

*What I Need To Buy*

- •1 bag of lentils
- •1 can tomatoes
- •1 onion
- •sandwich bread
- •1 head lettuce
- •1 bag carrots
- •1 lb.green grapes

## Parent & Child Activities

① **Have your child help you make a list of all the foods your family likes for meals. Once you've made this list, use it each week to help you choose foods to serve in the week ahead.**




*Family Meal Favorites*

*Beef Stew*
*Baked Ziti*
*Chicken Gumbo*
*Tacos*
*Bean soup & salad*
*Lemon chicken*
*Sloppy Joes*
*Ham & rice salad*
*Tuna casserole*
*Chicken & Dumplings*
*Vegetable stir-fry*
*Bean & rice casserole*

② **Have your child help you choose a meal to serve during the week. Or, ask her to choose a vegetable or fruit to serve at a meal. Discuss with her how we need many kinds of food to stay healthy.**

③ **Have your child help you make a shopping list. Ask her to count how many eggs, apples or other items you have left so you can decide how many to buy at the store.**

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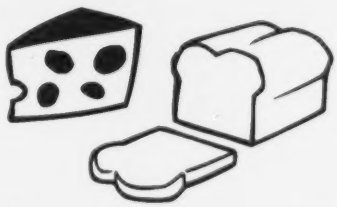
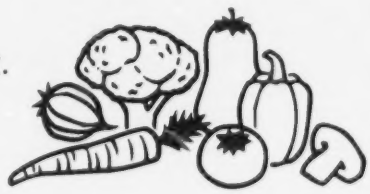
TIP BOX

# Healthy and Quick Meal Ideas

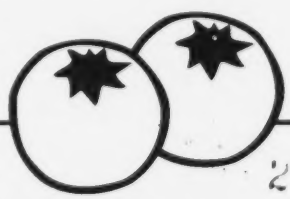
**These meals are healthy, cost less than fast food and are easy to make when you have little time to cook:**



- Fill pita bread halves with a mix of cottage cheese and cooked spinach. Heat.
- Top a big green salad with cheese cubes and cooked beans. Serve with bread.
- To make homemade mini pizzas, heat bread topped with tomato sauce, sliced vegetables and cheese. Serve fruit or frozen yogurt for dessert.



- Fill tortillas with beans and cheese. Heat. Serve with corn and salsa.
- Scramble eggs and cooked vegetables. Serve with toast or tortillas.
- Top bread with tuna, tomatoes or peppers and cheese. Heat until cheese melts.
- Make a meal of soup, sandwiches and fruit for dessert.





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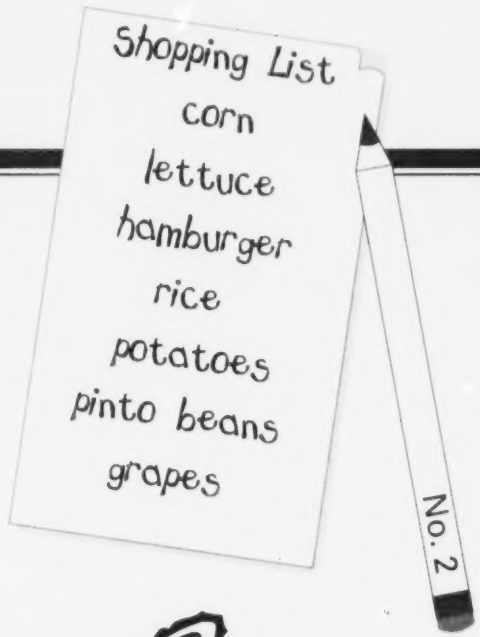
# Smart Food SHOPPING

Smart shopping means spending money wisely to get tasty and nutritious foods. It's easy once you learn how. Food shopping can be a time for learning for your child, too.

## How To SAVE money at the store




- Plan ahead of time what to buy. Bring along a shopping list.

- Don't shop when you (or your children) are hungry. This will help you stick to your shopping list.

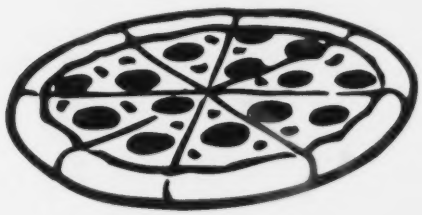
- Buy the store brands. These foods are as nutritious as name brands, but usually cost much less (see Tip Box).

- If fresh vegetables and fruits are expensive or out of season, try using frozen or canned produce. They often cost less than fresh but still provide good nutrition. To cut back on sugar and salt, rinse and drain canned fruits and vegetables before serving.

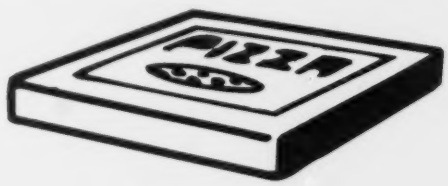
- Buy larger sized packages of food that you use often and that don't spoil, like peanut butter, cereals and rice. Use unit pricing to decide which package is the best buy (see Tip Box).

•Stock up on sale items that you use if you have room to store them. Buying and freezing foods on sale like meats and breads can save you money.

•Try not to buy "convenience" foods like prepackaged salad mixes, shredded cheese or precut carrot sticks. These foods cost more than making such foods on your own.



HOMEMADE – $2.50




STORE BOUGHT – UP TO $8.00

•If your child wants you to buy foods like frozen mini-pizzas, frozen burritos, or individual pudding cups, discuss how much more fun it is to make these foods at home. Plan to do such an activity in the future with him.

•Look for bargains in other places. Try:

*bakery outlets
*retail/discount stores
*farmers' markets

•Use coupons if:
*the item is something you've planned to buy or use,

*and*

*by using the coupon, the item costs less than all other brands

# Parent & Child Activities

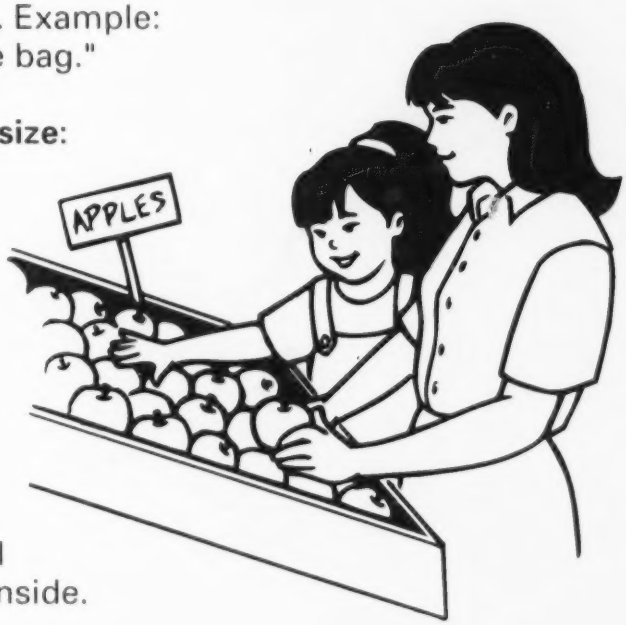
**Shopping with young children is often a challenge. When you have the time, here are some ideas for making food shopping a time for learning for your child:**

## AT THE STORE:

•**Have your child:**

**Count** the number of items you need. Example: "Please put five of those apples in the bag."

**Find some items based on color and size:** Example:
"Can you find a bigger can of these beans on the shelf?" or "Show me the red grapes".




**Use his senses.** Let your child touch or smell fruits, vegetables, and bread that you've chosen.

Have him look at the pictures on food packages and guess what foods are inside.

## AT HOME:

•When you can't bring your child shopping with you, have him...

- •**Look** at the pictures on food packages and guess what foods are inside.
- •**Count** how many apples or cans you bought.
- •**Describe** the shapes or colors of some items.

•**Help your child link foods and good health.** Example: "This cereal has iron in it. Iron helps our blood stay strong."

# TIP BOX

# Shopping Wise with Unit Pricing

**Many stores have price labels on the shelves that look like this:**

| | Unit Price | You Pay | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.→ | $0.25 per ounce | $1.25 | ←2. |
| 3.→ | 5 oz. Snack Chips | ||||||| | | |

•Price labels give many kinds of information.

1.→ How much food costs per unit (or unit price). A unit can be a pound (lb.), ounce (oz.), gallon, quart, etc.

2.→ Your total cost for the item.

3.→ Size of package and product name.

**•To find the Best Buys:**

Compare unit price (1) of similar items to find which brand costs less per unit. For example, compare the unit price of raisins in a canister, box and snack boxes.

| Unit Price | You Pay |
|---|---|
| $1.33 per pound | $1.99 |
| 24 oz. Raisins ||||||| |

**CANISTER**

Best Buy!

| Unit Price | You Pay |
|---|---|
| $1.27 per pound | $1.19 |
| 15 oz. Raisins ||||||| |

**BOX**

| Unit Price | You Pay |
|---|---|
| $1.76 per pound | $ .99 |
| 9 oz. Raisins ||||||| |

**6 – 1½ SNACK BOXES**

These labels show that the **box** costs less per pound than the canister or snack boxes. Store brands and larger containers sometimes cost less per unit but not always.

*Adapted from *Smart Food Shopping* developed by the Maine WIC Program



Prepared by Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy, Tufts University (617-627-3956) for HIPPY USA

# Preparing food with YOUNG CHILDREN

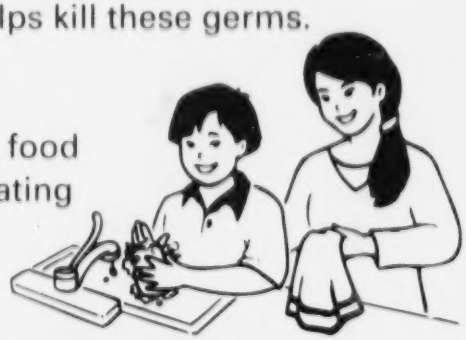
Preparing food helps children learn about nutrition, and where foods come from and how they are made. Helping in the kitchen also lets young children practice skills like stirring, pouring, counting and sorting. Your child will learn best by using her senses (touching, tasting, smelling). Let her explore but keep safety in mind.

# How To MAKE Your Kitchen a Classroom

## ① Keep your child SAFE in the kitchen.

- **Do not leave children alone in the kitchen.**

- Make sure children **do not taste foods made with raw eggs or raw meat.** When these foods are not cooked they have germs that can make people very sick. Cooking these foods thoroughly helps kill these germs. **Wash raw fruits and vegetables before tasting.**



- **Teach your child to wash her hands** before handling food and after using the bathroom, sneezing, coughing, eating or touching raw foods. Follow this rule yourself: your child learns by watching what you do.

- **Teach your child to stay away from** hot stoves and ovens, boiling liquids, sharp knives and things with moving parts (like mixers and blenders).

② Treat spills and other mishaps as part of learning. Wipe up spills quickly to avoid slips and falls. Show your child the best way to clean them up.

③ Try the **Parent and Child Activities** when you have time.

- Have your child do tasks on a sturdy work surface like a kitchen or play table. Have her use smaller spoons or bowls, or work with smaller amounts of food. This makes most tasks easier and safer for young children.

- Teach your child how to do something by showing her first, and then letting her try.

- Keep in mind that your child might not do a perfect job at first. Give praise for effort ("I can see you've worked hard on that. I am proud of how hard you tried.")

- Share with other family members how your child helped. Ask her to describe what she did and what it was like.

## Parent & Child Activities

① **Here are some skill-building tasks for your child to try:**

For **younger children (age 3 & up)** or children with little practice in the kitchen:

- **Squeezing lemons** (cut fruit into halves or fourths for them first)
- **Washing vegetables and fruits**
- **Stirring or mixing**
- **Mashing** (use soft foods like bananas)
- **Kneading** (a small amount of dough)
- **Using a cookie cutter** to cut shapes from dough
- **Tearing** lettuce or greens

For **older children:**

- MEASURING **ingredients**
- **Pouring food into bowls**
- **Slicing soft foods with a plastic knife**
- **Rolling dough or meat into balls**

Have your child help you clean up too. Show her how to:

- **Wring out a sponge**
- **Wipe the table**
- **Wash, rinse or dry dishes**

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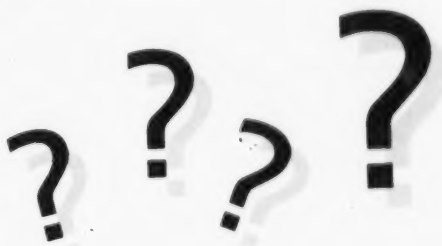
(2) **A**sk your child questions or have her do tasks that let her practice skills like counting and reasoning. For example, if you are mashing potatoes, ask your child to:

- **Count the potatoes**
- **Arrange the potatoes in order from biggest to smallest**
- **Describe how the potato feels and what it looks like**
- **Describe how the potatoes change when they are cooked**

(3) **T**ry pretending. For example, if you are working with dough, pretend you and your child are bakers.

- What foods do you make?
- How do you make them?
- How do they smell or taste?
- Who will eat them?
- When will they eat them?



TIP BOX

# Simple Recipes for Small Hands

## Banana Boats

**What you need:**

- 1 small banana
- 1/2 cup cottage cheese (or frozen yogurt)
- small amount of canned fruit (peach slices, pear slices, or fruit cocktail)
- 1–2 graham crackers

**What you do:**

1. Split banana lengthwise and lay on a small dish.
2. Scoop cottage cheese (or yogurt) on top of banana.
3. Drain canned fruit and spoon over cottage cheese (or yogurt).
4. Crumble graham crackers over mixture.
5. Serve for breakfast or lunch. Grab two spoons and share as a snack.

## Japanese Salad

**What you need:**

- 1 small zucchini (or cucumber)
- 1/4 cup vinegar
- 1/4 cup sugar or 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce

**What you do:**

1. Wash vegetable and slice very thin (do not peel).
2. Mix vinegar, sugar (or honey) and soy sauce together.
3. Add raw vegetables to soy mixture.
4. Let soak for 10 minutes, stirring often.
5. Drain extra liquid and eat with chopsticks (if you want).

*Source: Wanamaker, et al. *More Than Graham Crackers*

## Anytime Burrito

**What you need:**

- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1/3 cup shredded cheese
- 2 tablespoons chopped green pepper
- 2 tablespoons chopped onion
- 1 flour tortilla
- salsa (if you want)

**What you do:**

1. In a bowl, mix egg & milk together with a fork
2. Pour the mixture into a frying pan. Cook over medium heat.
3. When mixture begins to thicken, add cheese, peppers & onions. Cook 3-4 minutes.
4. Wrap in tortilla. Put salsa on the top.

*Source: FOOD! Supplement to The Boston Globe Newspaper in Education Program



Prepared by Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy, Tufts University (617-627-3956) for HIPPY USA

# For PARENTS

You know your child better than anyone else does. You know how your child behaves when he's hungry, what he likes to eat, and what he refuses to eat. This makes you the best person to teach your child about healthy eating.

It is never too early to learn about healthy eating. Learning to make good food choices early in life will help keep your child healthy and will help him to do better in school. Children who eat right are more alert, less likely to be sick, and ready to learn.

***Exploring Healthy Eating: Activities for Parents and Children Together*** gives you ways to teach your young child good eating habits. It tells you how you and your child can explore healthy eating at meal time, in the kitchen, at the grocery store, and at story time. The series talks about how to:

- **Keep your child's mind on learning**
- **Encourage good eating habits**
- **Make mealtimes pleasant and a time for learning**
- **Plan snacks and meals on a budget**
- **Shop wisely (with or without children)**
- **Prepare food with young children**
- **Feed babies and toddlers the foods they need to grow and stay healthy**

***Exploring Healthy Eating: Activities for Parents and Children Together*** is easy to use. Read the units. Pick out the tips and activities that you would like to share with your child. Have fun exploring all the ways you can teach your child about healthy eating!

These materials were prepared by the Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy, Tufts University. We are very grateful for contributions from the following organizations: HIPPY USA, Ocean State HIPPY and the New England Dairy and Food Council.
This project was made possible by sustained program and generous financial support of the Hasbro Children's Foundation.

***About the Center***

**The Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy** aims to advance public policy choices which reduce hunger and poverty. It carries out policy research and analyses and works with national, state and local leaders to promote effective programs and to develop a greater understanding of policy alternatives for the nation.

Through its new initiative, **State Works,** the Center builds capacity at the state level to promote beneficial programs and policies for children and their families. The Center serves as a key resource on issues such as **Community Food Security** (e.g. expanding Universal Free Breakfast, Summer Food), **Family Income Security** (e.g. increasing asset development, welfare reform analyses) and **Nutrition Education and Communication** (e.g. in-service training for educators, nutrition education curriculum).

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